

Sunday, July 11, 2021
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INI - SDG

Jesus Does the Impossible

Psalm 98:1 Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.

We are impressed when people do the impossible not the mundane. It is not that impressive when an adult rides a bike. It is impressive if he were to ride it along a tight rope stretched between the top of two skyscrapers. That would be something to see.

The things that God has done for us are marvelous works because they are impossible. That is our theme for VBS starting tomorrow, Jesus does the impossible. These impossible things are marvelous.

The marvelous works of the Lord remain long after the monuments of the ancients are gone.

Can you name all seven wonders of the ancient world?

Great Pyramid of Giza, Hanging Gardens of Babylon, Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, Statue of Zeus at Olympia, Mausoleum at Halicarnassus (also known as the Mausoleum of Mausolus), Colossus of Rhodes, and the Lighthouse of Alexandria

How many did you get? I remembered four of the seven before I looked them up. How incredible would it be to see some of these in person? Yet they are all gone except the pyramid.

The ancient world was all about monuments. They wanted to build monuments that would stand forever declaring their greatness. That was their purpose to cause people to sing the greatness of those who built them. Yet despite how incredible these monuments are, we rarely start singing the praise of their makers. In fact, I could not tell you who built one of those monuments. I have seen the Taj Mahal four times and still could not tell you who built it. I certainly never felt like bursting into song.

The Psalmist does burst into song when he thinks of the marvelous acts of God.

One of the things that makes God's works more marvelous is that they are a part of our lives. It is much easier to remember what people do for me in my life than to remember who built the Colossus of Rhodes. God's marvelous acts are not buildings but things that touch our lives.

Psalm 145:16 ¹⁶ You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing.

This Psalm reminds us that God's marvelous acts are a part of our daily lives. The marvelous things that the Lord has done are not works of stone but acts of grace and mercy in the lives of sinful men.

All the seven wonders of the ancient world except one are gone. If they are not exactly forgotten, neither do we have anyway to see them. We can read descriptions of them but it is hard to be impressed with a description.

The marvelous works of God are not forgotten. We read them in scripture. God's marvelous acts are so marvelous that even though we are only reading a description of them we are still impressed, impressed enough to sing a new song.

The pyramids and the Taj Mahal are impressive, but even when I see them in person, I do not have any desire to sing their praise. God's marvelous works are so great that even just hearing a description of them moves us to sing his praise.

The marvelous works of the Lord accomplish more than the technology of modern man.

John 21:25 ²⁵ And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

If the ancient world was obsessed with monuments, modern man is obsessed with technology. It is our desire to harness the power of nature to do wondrous things. The thing that impresses us is not how high we can build but how fast we can shoot a rocket. Not how long a monument will last but how quickly we can exchange data around the world.

Yet once again Jesus' marvelous works are so much greater. He has no need to harness the power of nature. His own is greater.

Man dams the rivers to try and control them. Jesus simply speaks "be still" and the lakes and the storms subside.

Man splits the atom to flatten our foes. Jesus simply speaks "I am he" and they all fall down.

Man spends millions of dollars on equipment and hours in surgery to delay death. Jesus simply speaks "little girl arise" and brings the dead back to life.

But most importantly Jesus does not use this power to store data, or travel to the moon, but to change the lives of people, to heal, to give hope, to forgive sins, to rescue those who lay in the shadow of death. New technologies are always promising us they are going to change our lives. And in some ways they do. But not in the important ways. Jesus changes our lives by wiping away our sin.

The marvelous works of the Lord are more powerful than the cataclysmic events of nature

Mark 4:41 ⁴¹ And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

One thing that does sometimes stop us in our tracks and make us exclaim in amazement is the raw power of natural events. Video footage of an earthquake, a volcano, a tidal wave, a hurricane, or wildfires, often makes us stop in amazement at the raw power of such things. These things are marvelous and incredible but also deadly.

Jesus' marvelous works are the opposite of all these things. Where they bring chaos and fear and death, Jesus brings order, and peace and life. Two of Jesus' marvelous works are the sacraments, baptism and communion. Here Jesus' power is at work to do the impossible. They are small and unimpressive, where volcanoes are large, yet the power of the sacraments are greater. They bring life one person at a time where hurricanes bring death to hundreds or thousands, yet their power is greater. They bring peace where wildfires bring fear, yet their power is greater.

We marvel at the forces of nature but the marvelous things that the Lord has done in the sacraments are far more impressive. Jesus does the impossible through the sacraments. He has more power than an exploding volcano.

So what are the seven wonders of Jesus? It might be hard to choose just seven there are so many marvelous works that Jesus does. Here is the list I made:

Creation – Incarnation (God became man) – Justification (Jesus died for our sins) – Resurrection - Ascension - Sanctification (giving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and in the sacraments) – Judgement Day

Which ever works of Jesus you would chose for a list of seven they are all marvelous. Jesus does the impossible. And he does it for us and in our lives.

Amen